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beautiful body. There must be intellectual vigor. But there must be, if a people shall endure, the material for intellectual nutriment. There are to-day new intellectual and spiritual wants. There must be new and fertile ideas which may crystallize into new religious beliefs and ideals. To furnish these ideas and ideals is the inevitable task of the poet, the artist and the philosopher.

While Professor Bergson has said many things derogatory of the human intellect, and a lot of nonsense about the original power of the intuitions which we have now lost, he has said many brave words for philosophy. He has made the vital suggestion (which, so far as I have seen, seems to have been unnoticed) that philosophy pursuing certain lines of facts all converging on the same point "may give an accumulation of probabilities which will gradually approximate scientific certainty."

Well, what greater certainty can we ask? And is not the human intellect, with its dogged slave, Observation, its angel-attendant Imagination, practically infinite? May not that intellect which sweeps over infinite time and space, which holds in its hand, like a flower, the whole stellar universe, solve at least some of those problems which are the very cause of philosophy's existence?

Why should we deny the final intelligibility of the universe? Why may not philosophy pass over the threshold of speculation into the domain of actual knowledge? Why may there not be a definite conquest by philosophy as well as by science? Who can limit what philosophy may do when squarely facing the supreme problems and not frittered away, as Bergson says, "upon a host of special problem in psychology, in morals, in logic."

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THE FALLACY IN MR. H. G. WELLS'S "NEW RELIGION."

In his book, *God the Invisible King*, which hails the appearance of a "new religion," Mr. H. G. Wells proclaims himself the spokesman of his age, the "scribe to the spirit of his generation."¹ If he claims to speak for the scientists as well as for the less enlightened portions of society, his conclusions are startling, to say the least,

¹ *God the Invisible King*, p. 171.

in view, not only of the commonly observed lack of religious belief among scientists, but also of the statistical study by which Professor Leuba² has shown that the majority of scientists in America, and presumably elsewhere, disclaim any belief in God.

Were it not that he implicates "that very great American, the late William James,"³ whom he calls his master, Wells's religious views would, perhaps, scarcely merit consideration by philosophers. So far, however, as the views of Wells are due to James's influence, they deserve examination; and the fact that *God the Invisible King* is a book intended primarily for popular consumption need not condemn it in the sight even of professional philosophers, when it is remembered that James (and so why not, perhaps, James's disciple?) could be both popular and profound.

A finite God is proclaimed in Wells's new religion, and at once a point of similarity between Wells and James is noted. James was insistent that the Absolute of the philosophers could not be the God of religion, and Wells is equally insistent upon this point. But, whereas James asserted that personal immortality is the core of religion, and that the chief function of God would be the guaranteeing of immortality,⁴ Wells regards this question as an irrelevant issue in religion, interest in which is evidence of egotism.⁵ Whether James was not nearer than Wells to a correct interpretation of the religious consciousness regarding the belief in immortality is a question that might appropriately be raised, though I shall omit consideration of it here.

Limiting my discussion to questions of the nature of God, and of the evidence for His existence, in Wells's view, I desire to point out the closeness with which Wells follows James's line of thought, to the extent of committing one of the same fallacies that James commits.

Wells's God is not the Life Force or the Will to Live,⁶ neither is He the Collective Mind of the Race.⁷ Wells, like James, insists that God must be genuinely personal, existing within a temporal environment, aiding mankind in its upward struggle, and accessible to man through what James calls "prayerful communion". In

² J. H. Leuba, *The Belief in God and Immortality*, Boston, 1916.

³ Wells, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

⁴ *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 524; *Human Immortality*, Ingersoll Lecture. This view of James's accounts in part for his interest in psychical research.

⁵ *Op. cit.*, Preface, p. xix.

⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 17.

⁷ *Op. cit.*, pp. 61, 62.

Wells's view, as in James's, evidence for God's existence is found in so-called religious experiences, mystical in nature. James expresses it as follows: "There *are* religious experiences of a specific nature They point with reasonable probability to the continuity of our consciousness with a wider spiritual environment."⁸ "Personal religious experience has its root and center in mystical states of consciousness."⁹ And Wells says similarly: "Modern religion bases its knowledge of God and its account of God entirely upon experience."¹⁰ "This cardinal experience is an undoubting, immediate sense of God. It is the attainment of an absolute certainty that one is not alone in oneself The moment may come while we are alone in the darkness, under the stars, or while we walk by ourselves or in a crowd, or while we sit and muse. It may come upon the sinking ship or in the tumult of battle After it has come our lives are changed, God is with us and there is no more doubt of God. Thereafter one goes about the world like one who was lonely and has found a lover One is assured that there is a Power that fights with us against the confusion and evil within us and without."¹¹ In accepting the mystical experience as the basis of religious belief, Wells agrees completely with James. As Wells himself says,¹² "So far as its psychological phases go the new account of personal salvation . . . has little to tell that is not already familiar to the reader of William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*."

When God's existence is argued for upon the basis of the religious experience, a crucial question arises regarding the externality and objectivity of the God that is believed in. Here arises what I have called the fallacy of false attribution, "which consists in the erroneous interpretation of an experience whereby the experience is attributed to an external, divine source in cases where a physiological explanation is adequate to account for it."¹³ With Wells as with James there is no doubt regarding the objectivity of the God evidence for whose existence is thought to be found in mystical experiences. James classifies himself as a "piecemeal supernaturalist."¹⁴ Piecemeal supernaturalism "admits miracles and

⁸ *A Pluralistic Universe*, pp. 299, 300.

⁹ *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 379.

¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 20.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 24.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹³ Cf. the author's article "Two Common Fallacies in the Logic of Religion," *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Methods*, Vol. XIV, pp. 653-660. The above quotation is from page 657.

¹⁴ *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 520.

providential leadings, and finds no intellectual difficulty in mixing the ideal and the real worlds together by interpolating influences from the ideal region among the forces that causally determine the real world's details."¹⁵ Nowhere in Wells's writings do we find quite so frank a statement of supernaturalism; but in denying that God is the Collective Mind of Humanity,¹⁶ in admitting "help from without,"¹⁷ in speaking of an "exterior reference"¹⁸ of the religious experience, and in insisting that "God is an external reality,"¹⁹ Wells commits himself to such a view. And with such a view goes the fallacy of false attribution, which is found in the arguments of both Wells and James²⁰ for the existence of God.

The fallacy of false attribution is committed by Wells, we must agree, so far as it is possible to explain the religious experience in terms of physiological psychology; and there seems to be little difficulty in accounting for the experience as a form of emotionalism, which is *interpreted, after* the experience, as an experience of communion with God. The mystic *believes* that he experiences an objective God, a reality which is more permanent than the passing experience, and which is the source of the experience. Such belief is essential in connection with the mystical experience in order to make it a religious experience. But, though the *belief* in God is present, God need not be real; and, in fact, it is the belief, and not the object of the belief, God, that does the "work" in religion that James and Wells speak of. Thus Wells says:²¹ "Prayer is a power. Here God can indeed work miracles." And in saying this he is illustrating very clearly the fallacy of false attribution. If a physiologically grounded psychology is to be admitted to the circle of the sciences, then we must say here that it is the psycho-physiological activity of belief that does the "miraculous" work—work which is falsely attributed to God.

Whoever claims that evidence for the existence of God, defined concretely enough to be significant, as Wells's God is defined, is to be found in experiences of a mystical sort, must give reasons for asserting that the mystical experience is anything more than a strongly marked emotional state, in which the sentiment of love is prominent, together with a strong conviction regarding the divine

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 520, 521.

¹⁶ Wells, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

²⁰ See the author's article, *loc. cit.*, pp. 657-660, for a discussion of the fallacy of false attribution as found in James's views.

²¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 155.

source of the emotion and the divine object of the human sentiment of love. The conviction, or belief, moreover, as to the source of the experience is not derived from the experience, but from tradition, education, and social influences in general. Professor Hocking's claim that "the love of God is the one natural instinct of man"²² is ungrounded. The biologist and the psychologist fail to discover "love of God" among the instincts. There is no religious instinct. Love of God is a form taken by instinctive love when *interpreted* in a religious fashion; and the religious interpretation is not instinctive, but is due to social influences. The experience comes from "below," through the sublimation of a very primitive instinct, and is to be explained in naturalistic terms; but it is interpreted by the mystic as coming from "above," and not to be explained naturalistically. In the mystic's interpretation there inheres the fallacy of false attribution.

The mystical solution of the problem of religion, to which Wells resorts, is inadequate except under one condition—that mysticism be made a thorough-going metaphysical doctrine, involving the complete denial of any reality to the world that the sciences study. Only in Nirvana could such a doctrine be consistently maintained.

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A PHILOSOPHICAL LITTERATEUR.

Prof. S. P. Sherman's work has been for the last few years one of the features of the *New York Nation*. Memorable are the vivid character-portrayal of Professor Kittredge (issue of September 11, 1913), the rollicking zest of "The Gaiety of Socrates" (July 15, 1915), and the mordant logic of his dissection of Mr. Roosevelt (November 29, 1917). But chiefly as the upholder of the conservative tradition in literary criticism has Mr. Sherman attained distinction. Most of his reviews of this character have recently been issued in a revised and enlarged form, together with an introduction expounding fully though somewhat loosely the author's *Weltanschauung*.

The book, entitled *On Contemporary Literature* (Henry Holt & Co.), makes delightful and stimulating reading. Though the accent is at times academic, the style is often vivid and racy. Take

²² W. E. Hocking, *The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, p. 577.